DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 244 EA 019 447

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TITLE Organizational Theory and Women: Where Are We?
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Characteristics; *Administrator Education; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Females; Interpersonal Competence; Organizational Theories; *Personality Traits; School Administration; School Community Relationship; School Effectiveness; Sex Bias; *Sex Differences; *Women Faculty
IDENTIFIERS Authority; Effective Schools Research; *Learning Environment; Power

ABSTRACT

While the world of teaching has been primarily female, the administration world has always been populated by men. While there are similarities in the backgrounds and experiences of males and females, the legacy of discrimination and exclusion has shaped a world in which women's experiences and behaviors are often unlike those of men. Research on women administrators has uncovered differences between the ways men and women approach administrative tasks; these differences have implications for training programs which were developed by men primarily for men. This paper explores the "female world of schools," focusing on characteristics of women administrators and speculating on what educational administration theory and practice would be like if it incorporated women's experiences and behaviors. The female world of school administrators is characterized by (1) the centrality of interpersonal relationships, (2) teaching and learning as the major focus, (3) the importance of building community, and (4) the marginality of daily worklife. Women managers are usually advised to imitate male behavior and integrate into existing institutional structures. However, "traditional" female approaches to schooling resemble prescriptions for administrative behavior in effective schools, and the "ideal" principal is now urged to cultivate the virtues of the ideal woman! Clearly, counseling women to act like men may not be in the best interests of either women or schools. Reconceptualizing administrative theory and practice demands reexamination of supervision, authority, working climate, motivation, school structure (especially the separation of teaching and administration), personnel selection, power, teamwork, and community relations. Recommendations for revitalizing administrator training programs are also given. Included are 26 references. (MLH)

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Organizational Theory and Women: Where are We?

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, April 20-24, 1987

EA 019 447

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It is old hat to point out that the world of teaching has been primarily a female one, while the world of administration has almost always been populated by men. While women have always been school administrators, men have dominated the field. Many speculate that this imbalance will come to an end in the next decade, as more women are appointed to positions of formal educational leadership. Currently, the number of women in administrative training programs is nearly equal to the number of men.

Research on women administrators uncovers differences between the ways men and women approach the tasks of administration. These differences have implications for administrative training programs, training programs that were developed by men primarily for men.

Although there are similarities in the backgrounds and experiences of male and female managers, it is also the case that they vary in important ways. The profiles of women administrators and their history in administration are not the same as the profiles and history of men in administration. Further, the legacy of discrimination and exclusion has shaped a world in which women's experiences and behaviors are often unlike those of men.

The world of women has important implications for theory and practice in a field. To be useful and inclusive, theory and practice need to take into account the experiences of all the players. Unfortunately, the field of educational administration, not unlike most other fields and disciplines, has not seen the world from a female perspective, and thus, presents only a partial picture.

The Female World of Schools

A number of writers (Bernard, 1981; Ferguson, 1984; Gilligan, 1982; Lenz & Myerhoff, 1985; Lyons, 1983, 1985; and Noddings, 1984) have written about a female culture and a female world. For instance, Jessie Bernard (1981) writes that not only do women and men experience "the world differently but also that the world women experience is demonstrably different from the world men experience" (p. 3). Gilligan (1982) elaborates:

> ...in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the dilemma itself is the same for both sexes, a conflict between integrity and care. But approached from a different perspective, this dilemma generates the recognition of opposite truths. These different perspectives are reflected in two different moral ideologies, since separation is justified by an ethic of rights while attachment is supported by an ethic of care. (p.164)

Studies of women administrators tend to confirm the view that women occupy a world, in addition to the one in which white males

live, that provides them with experiences and approaches to life that are different from those of men. The research on male and female administrators and the voices of the women administrators from interviews conducted, lead me to believe that both male and female administrators use a range of behaviors in their work, but that the patterns of use are different. Women administrators more often are guided by what Gilligan describes as "an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world" while male administrators are informed by "an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment" (p. 100).

This female world exists in schools and is reflected in the ways women work in schools. Based upon what is currently known of female work behavior in schools, this female world might be conceptualized in the following ways.

1. Relationships with others are central to all actions of women administrators. Women spend more time with people, communicate more, care more about individual differences, are concerned more with teachers and marginal students, and motivate more. Not surprisingly, staffs of women administrators rate women higher, are more productive, and have higher morale. Students in schools with women principals also have higher morale and are more involved in student affairs. Further, parents are more favorable toward schools and districts run by women and, thus, are more involved in school life. This focus on relationships and

connections echoes Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care.

2. Teaching and learning is the major focus of women administrators. Women administrators are more instrumental in instructional learning than are men, and they exhibit greater knowledge of teaching methods and techniques. Women administrators not only emphasize achievement, they coordinate instructional programs and evaluate student progress. In these schools and districts, women administrators know their teachers and they know the academic progress of their students. Women are more likely to help new teachers and to directly supervise all teachers. Women also create a school climate more conducive to learning, one that is more orderly, safer, and quieter. Not surprisingly, academic achievement is higher in schools and districts in which women are administrators.

3. Building community is an essential part of a woman administrator's style. From speech patterns to decision making styles, women exhibit a more democratic, participatory style that encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness in schools. Women involve themselves more with staff and students, ask for and get higher participation, and maintain more closely knit organizations. Staffs of women principals have higher job satisfaction and are more engaged in their work than those of male administrators. These staffs are also more aware of and committed to the goals of learning and the members of the staffs have more shared professional goals. These are schools and districts in which teachers receive a great deal of support from their female

administrators. They are also districts and schools where achievement is emphasized. Selma Greenberg (1985) describes this female school world: "whatever its failures, it is more cooperative than competitive, it is more experiential than abstract, it takes a broad view of the curriculum and has always addressed 'the whole child'" (p. 4)

4. Marginality overlays the daily worklife of women administrators. Token status and sexist attitudes toward women combine to create a world in which the woman administrator is always on display and always vulnerable to attack. Whether the assault actually occurs is less important than the knowledge that it is always possible. Women perceive their token status and realize that their actions reflect on all women. Jessie Bernard, in The Female World (1981), writes of this undercurrent of danger for women when she says:

> I take the misogyny of the male world as a given, as part of the environment of the female world. It has to be recognized and dealt with. (p. 31)

This misogyny of the male world makes women's lives in administration different from men's.

Administration and the Female World

What if the study of school administration took into account this female world? What would theory and practice look like? It's clear from an examination of the research and theory in educational administration that the female world of administrators has not been incorporated into the body of work in the field. Nor

are women's experiences carried into the practice literature. Prescriptions for practice in educational administration are primarily found in textbooks, in books and journal articles by practitioners, and in the conversations or lore shared within the field. A number of studies of the journals and textbooks of the field (both theory and practice oriented) have documented that women are not a subject of these documents (Nagle, Gardner, Levine & Wolf, 1982; Schmuck, Butman, & Person, 1982; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986; Tietze, Shakeshaft, & Davis, 1981).

If absence is the watchword in the traditional educational administration literature, imitation is the theme in books and articles for women managers, many of which have been described as survival manuals for women in bureaucracies. Books like Games Mother Never Taught You (Harragan, 1977) and The Managerial Woman (Hennig & Jardim, 1977) "take existing institutional arrangements for granted and seek strategies to integrate women into these arrangements" (Ferguson, 1984, p. 183). In these approaches, males have been studied and then women have been advised to imitate them. Women have been told to "act like a man", "not to cry", and "dress for success". What these books fail to examine are the ways in which acting like a man may not be the best strategy for a woman, and worse, may interfere with the goals of schooling.

For instance, the female world is very similar to the world of effective schools. Traditional female approaches to schooling look like the prescriptions for administrative behavior in

effective schools. In a recent synthesis of studies on effective leadership behavior (Sweeney, 1982), six themes emerged as behaviors which were consistently associated with well managed schools in which student achievement is high. Principals of such schools, according to the research:

1. Emphasize achievement. They give high priority to activities, instruction, and materials that foster academic success. Effective principals are visible and involved in what goes on in the school and its classrooms. They convey to teachers their commitment to achievement.
2. Set instructional strategies. They take part in instructional decision making and accept responsibility for decisions about methods, materials, and evaluation procedures. They develop plans for solving students' learning problems.
3. Provide an orderly atmosphere. They do what is necessary to ensure that the school's climate is conducive to learning: it is quiet, pleasant, and well-maintained.
4. Frequently evaluate student progress. They monitor student achievement on a regular basis. Principals set expectations for the entire school and check to make sure those expectations are being met. They know how well their students are performing as compared to students in other

schools.

5. Coordinate instructional programs. They interrelate course content, sequences of objectives, and materials in all grades. They see that what goes on in the classroom has bearing on the overall goals and program of the school.

6. Support teachers. Effective principals communicate with teachers about goals and procedures. They support teachers' attendance at professional meetings and workshops, and provide inservice that promotes improved teaching. (p. 349)

Similarly, Rutherford (1985) in a five year study of school principals found that effective principals:

1) have clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become - visions that focus on students and their needs; 2) translate these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for the teachers, students, and administrators; 3) establish school climates that support progress toward these goals and expectations; 4) continuously monitor progress; and 5) intervene in a supportive or corrective manner, when this seems necessary. (p. 32)

It is interesting to compare these two descriptions of effective administators with the portrait of the female administrative world. The similarities are striking and the

implications of a female world for effective schooling are dramatic. It appears that for a number of reasons, women possess characteristics that are conducive to good schooling. Women enter teaching with clear educational goals, supported by a value system which stresses service, caring, and relationships. Women are focused upon instructional and educational issues and have demonstrated that, when in charge, they are likely to build a school community which stresses achievement within a supportive atmosphere. Women's communication and decisionmaking styles stress cooperation and help to facilitate a translation of their educational visions into actions. Women monitor and intervene more than men, they evaluate student progress more often, and they manage more orderly schools. Women demonstrate, more often than men, the kinds of behavior that promote achievement and learning as well as high morale and commitment by staffs. Analyzing female approaches to administration might help to isolate particular strategies and behaviors which promote effective schooling that can be used by all administrators. Perhaps Bach (1976) summarizes much of what is good for schools about women's culture and women's styles when she says:

> The ideal principal must now cultivate all the virtues that have always been expected of the ideal woman. Women have finally lucked out by having several thousand years to train for jobs where muscles are out and persuasion is in! (p. 465)

Thus, to counsel women to act like men may not be in the best

interests of either women or schooling.

While we don't really know what we would see if we reshaped the school world around female culture and experience, we do have enough information about the female world to allow us to speculate on some issues of practice. The following section addresses practice issues with the perspective of gender in mind in an attempt to begin to think about the ways gender may be an important variable for understanding effective administrative practices. Imbedded in this discussion is the notion that these issues must be confronted by the entire field: researchers need to redirect their inquiries not only to include women but also to see the world through female eyes; and administrative training programs must incorporate this literature into their courses so that both men and women can begin to understand how gender affects their administrative style.

Taking the world of women into account in research and practice means a complete reshaping of the field. What, who, and how we study organizations will change. If we were to include the perspective of women, administrative training programs would need to be completely restructured -- the content of every course would be forced to change dramatically. The following issues are presented only as ways we might think about gender and administration, offering some preliminary questions to begin to move the field toward a reconceptualization of theory and practice that includes both males and females.

Supervision. Little has been written on the impact of

gender on successful supervision. This issue seems particularly salient given the sex structuring in schools which results in an organization in which males most often supervise females. Research tells us that the sex of participants affects what is communicated and how it is communicated. The same words spoken by a male supervisor have different meanings to male and female teachers. Conversely, an interaction between a female principal and a male teacher is not the same as an exchange between a female principal and a female teacher. What impact might our understanding of gender issues have on supervision?

We know that men and women communicate differently and that they listen for different information. It may be that in a supervisory conference in which a principal is discussing an instructional issue with the teacher, the women participant is listening for the feeling and the man for the facts. It may also be, given what we know of the values that males and females carry into their jobs in schools, that the woman is focused upon an instructional issue or a matter concerning the child, while the man has chosen to discuss an administrative problem.

Further, research tells us that there may be discomfort in communicating with a member of the other sex. Certainly, we know that male teachers exhibit more hostility in dealing with female administrators than do female teachers. We also know that women administrators have to work to get male teachers to "hear" them. Whether in job interviews or in determining job performance, women are initially evaluated less favorably than equally competent men.

Knowing that women are rated as less competent or less effective than men is important for developing supervisory styles (Frasher & Frasher, 1980).

Although women are often seen in a more negative light, this view is seldom directly communicated to them. Studies tell us that male administrators are less likely to be candid with a female teacher than are female administrators. When a male subordinate makes a mistake, his supervisor tends to level with him, "telling it like it is". When a female errs, she often isn't informed. Instead, the mistake is corrected by others. The results are two-fold. For the male, learning takes place instantly. He gets criticism and the chance to change his behavior. He learns to deal with negative opinions of his work and has the option of improving. Females often never hear anything but praise, even if their performance is known to be less than ideal. This results in the woman being denied the opportunity for immediate feedback which would allow her to improve her performance. It also results in a woman's misconception of her abilities. If all she hears is that she is doing a good job, it comes as a shock to her when she is fired, demoted or not promoted. Illustrative is a sex discrimination case in California. A woman supervisor had been demoted because of poor performance, and it was clear from the record and from the woman's own accounts that she had not been an effective administrator. And yet, all of her evaluations rated her in the highest category possible. Further, her supervisor, the assistant superintendent,

revealed that he had never communicated his displeasure, but rather had "fixed her mistakes" without her knowledge. When she was demoted, she cried sex discrimination, since she had no feedback which would have given her another picture. Why had no one honestly discussed her performance with her?

Interviews with women administrators and their supervisors indicate that her case is not unusual (Shakeshaft, 1986). Women do not get corrective feedback as often as do men. In interviews with male superintendents and principals in which I asked them why they didn't confront women, all expressed that one reason was their fear of women's tears. The threat of crying kept supervisors from giving important corrective feedback that would have allowed women to improve their performance as educators.

Does this mean that we should advise women not to cry? I think not. In reality, women administrators seldom give way to tears. Because it is the threat of crying that deters feedback, we need to demystify this emotion by teaching people mechanisms for coping with tears in the same way that we have instructed them in dealing with the traditional male response of anger.

Authority. There are a number of ways that males and females have been advised to establish their authority as leaders, but very little has been done to determine whether these approaches work for women. Are the issues surrounding authority the same for a male and a female? Do men carry with them, by the nature of their sex, legitimate authority -- authority that women must earn in other ways? Is authority the same for a female

supervising a female staff as for a female supervising a male staff? How does a woman become identified as "in charge" without being identified in negative or unfeminine ways? These are issues that women administrators often discuss and which are not covered in the sections on authority in the traditional texts in administration.

In trying to command or maintain authority women must take into account not only the people with whom they work, but also how those people view women. Many women note that ways of establishing authority that work for men don't necessarily work for them. Contrary to the notion that being like a man will automatically signify authority, many women voice concern over the effectiveness of such strategies. Some women report that they try to look less authoritarian, less in charge, and less threatening in an effort to be effective. Many comment that "the less I threaten the men I work with, the more I am able to accomplish". As a result, these women administratrators often downplay their power, intellect, and skill. Through language and appearance, they make themselves more tentative and less threatening. These strategies appear to work. The success these women report is supported by studies that confirm that women with male subordinates were more influential when they used a consideration style as opposed to a dominant one, while with woman subordinates both styles worked. Similarly, studies indicate that men rate women who appear less threatening higher than women who are seen as more competent.

Not surprisingly, women report using strategies that subtly signal authority. For instance, a number of women have confided that they completed doctoral work so that they could carry with them the aura of legitimate authority, transmitted by the title, Dr. These women want to be called Dr. not only because it confers legitimacy, but also because they are seeking ways to shed the use of Mrs. and Miss, titles that diminish them. When the use of Dr. is not appropriate, Ms. has been found to be a more powerful title than either Mrs. or Miss, since it has been shown to establish authority more quickly and to elicit the image of a person in charge more often thant Mrs. or Miss does (Anderson, Finn, & Leider, 1981).

Climate. The climate in which women work may have an impact on the strategies they choose to use to manage. The more male dominated an organization, the more women are conscious of their own behavior and the more they calculate each move. Being a token means that women are always on stage, a condition that adds stress to already stressful jobs. How can we diagnose the climate of a school if we fail to include in that description the ways that a particular group of people, i.e. women, are treated? Climate descriptions need to incorporate the day-to-day lives of women that men seldom experience -- sexual harrassment, subtle forms of discrimination, and lowered expectations.

Motivation. Studies of motivation have demonstrated that women educators are motivated differently than are men. Women also define career in ways that are foreign to men (Biklen, 1985).

The implications of this research for administrators attempting to motivate staffs are crucial to the formulation of a restructuring of the profession that has been called for in recent reform reports. Women enter education to teach, to be close to children, to be able to make a difference. Offers of money or career ladders which take women away from the instructional decisions of the school may not be effective ways of motivating them. Further, continuing to structure school so that administrative jobs become more and more disassociated with the task of learning, almost insures that women will opt out of administration. Intriligator (1983) points out that women seek leadership roles in schools that don't take them away from teaching.

> Women union leaders reported that they became a union leader in order to both be in the company of adults and to do important things, while at the same time maintaining their satisficing professional role as teacher. (p. 11)

Structure of Schools. The structure of schooling is itself antithetical to the ways women work best. Separating teaching from administration so that the power for change is in the administrator's hands is an organizational format which women did not choose. Studies of female defined schools indicate that they are child centered, small, use shared decisionmaking, and non-hierarchical (Greenberg, 1985; Smith, 1979). In the initial organization of schools, education didn't have to follow the lead of industry and separate teaching from the decisionmaking process.

We could have selected another metaphor of organization (Hanson, 1984). Administrative paperwork and tasks could have been delegated to secretaries or clerks, while the definition of administrator might have remained as instructional leader. However, over the years, instructional leadership has been more and more replaced by a management metaphor. Some even believe that a good school administrator need never have been a teacher or, in fact, needs to know nothing of education since schools are really big business. Interestingly, few women educators hold this view. A female defined organizational structure probably would not have resulted in such overspecialization, in extreme forms of hierarchy, or in administrators being mere managers.

Personnel Selection. The issues of personnel selection need to be examined in light of both gender differences and discriminatory practices. Those who hire must become aware of the subtle and not so subtle biases that we all hold toward women. It is crucial that we examine interview and selection procedures for the presence of bias, as well as to determine ways of overcoming these biases so that the best person is hired. Until we do that, women should to be instructed in the most effective ways to confront bias in personnel selection as well as to be given the context in which to understand discriminatory practices directed toward them, so that they do not internalize rejection and label it their failure.

Power. Power means different things to men and women. A number of studies provide evidence that women use power to empower

others. This sharing of power is based on the notion that power is not finite, but rather that it expands as it is shared. Uses of power in this way need to be further explored and their impact upon schools should be investigated.

Similarly, the team concept for women incorporates this notion of community. Women define a team player as someone who cooperates toward the achievement of group goals. Women see the "support of group action and the achievement of group satisfaction" as the primary descriptors of a team player (Gips, Navin, Branch, & Nutter, 1984). Men, on the other hand, more often define a team player as one who has a job to do and who is responsible for one piece of the action. Women stress cooperation and collaboration while men stress autonomy and individuality. Harragan (1977) offers a contrast between a female and a male team concept:

> If you ask a group of women what a team is, they will usually say it means: "Everybody should cooperate to get the job done." "Everybody pitches in, doing whatever they can do to help others." "Everyone is responsible for the team result, thus, you have to cover for somebody who slacks off."....if you ask a ten year old boy what a team is, he will often respond in baseball terminology. "There's a pitcher, a catcher, a first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, fielders, and so on." Notice, there is nothing vague about that

> description, no generalized vagaries about a bunch of guys supporting one another. By the time they are ten, little boys know - and they don't even know they know, but they do - that a team is a very rigid structure and has a prescribed function, that each player covers his own position and nobody elses. (pgs. 17-18)

These differences can result in misunderstandings between men and women about what is a good team player. A good team player for a male might be considered a lazy deadweight by a female, whereas a female's concept of team may cause her to be judged as an interfering meddler by a male.

The collaborative approach to decisionmaking which shares power, may cause women to be initially evaluated as weak or ineffective. Women who manage from a collaborative framework do so in a system that stresses the value of competitive individualism and personal achievement at the expense of community goals. Thus, women often report that they first establish themselves and then introduce participatory styles. Those women who initiate collaborative approaches immediately generally prepare their staffs for these approaches and acknowledge that at first, they were mistaken for weak administrators. Nevertheless, the research offers overwhelming evidence that women's collaborative style works best and over the long haul is instrumental in women being rated as effective leaders.

Community Relations Because of these collaborative

strategies, women seem to have more positive interactions with community members. Just as women administrators differ from men, so, too, do women school board members approach their jobs with a different perspective than their male colleagues. Women board members not only tend to "give priority to the content and quality of the education program, they perceive their roles more politically than men, answering to a constituency" (Marshall & Heller, 1983, p. 31). Men board members leave the educational decisions to the administrators, but gauge a superintendent's effectiveness by how efficiently she or he is administratively. Women, on the other hand, emphasize superintendent and board evaluations focused on educational content. These gender differences have ramifications for a superintendent's interactions with her or his board.

Women and Educational Administration

The implications of the research on women administrators for training programs, for practice, and for theory and research in educational administration are wideranging. If the field were to heed women's experiences, we might restructure training programs and rewrite the textbooks. Theory and research would need to be reconceptualized to take women into account. Only when this is done, will we be able to understand human behavior in organizations. Until then we are writing a history and practice of males in school administration. As scholarship, this is shoddy and deficient. As practice, it is useful to only some practitioners. The most immediate action that needs to be taken

is to develop a research agenda that allows us to discover the factors that need to be taken into consideration if we are to respond to our women students. Specifically, the following recommendations are made to those involved in training programs in administration.

1. Courses should be expanded to include women's experiences in administration. Where materials are unavailable to address these, they should be developed. UCEA, ASCD, AASA and other involved organizations should be requested to prepare curricular aids that incorporate the female world.

2. Case studies of women administrators should be developed and used in classes.

3. Women speakers should be brought to the classroom and to the campus to discuss the issues relevant to female students.

4. Where possible, women students should intern with women administrators.

5. Research on the styles of women administrators should be supported and encouraged.

6. Women should be added to faculties in educational administration.

7. Workshops sponsored by UCEA might be held for administration professors in an effort to help incorporate the research on women into course materials.

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